

WEED ALERT!

On July 3, 1990, Chapter 90-313 was approved and became law. The general public, members of the nursery industry and water resource managers need to be aware of the serious threat to Florida's environment posed by Schinus terebinthifolius, Melaleuca quinquenervia, Casuarina equisetifolia and Casuarina glauca and penalties provided by this law.

Schinus terebinthifolius Raddi

Brazilian pepper (*Schinus terebinthifolius*), Florida holly

A small escaped ornamental tree (typically to 10 feet height but can reach 40 feet in height) native to Brazil and Paraguay. First introduced in about 1892, now is abundant in disturbed moist to mesic sites in the southern half of the Florida peninsula. Dense thickets exclude native vegetation by shading and chemical inhibition of their growth, and provide relatively poor wildlife habitat. Brazilian pepper (Anacardiaceae: sumac family) is related to poisonwood, poison oak, poison ivy, mango, pistachio, etc.; the berries are eaten by birds and other wildlife with narcotic or toxic effects during some parts of the year.

Brazilian pepper produces dense clusters of small (1.5 mm) white flowers usually in spring. Clusters of small berries (6 mm diameter) change from green to bright red as they ripen, hence the misnomer "Florida holly." Trees are moderately salt tolerant, withstand flooding, fire, drought, and quickly resprout after being cut. The root system is not considered very invasive. Brazilian pepper is considered a serious threat to natural Florida ecosystems.